

OW Management Report

Gold King Mine Release and Typhoons Soudelor/Goni

August 18, 2015

Gold King Mine Release

Background:

On August 5, while investigating the Gold King Mine in Colorado, an EPA cleanup team triggered a release of mine wastewater into Cement Creek. The EPA is working closely with responders and local, state and tribal officials to monitor water contaminated by the release. The release's path flows through three of the EPA's regions - Region 8 (Colorado, Utah, Southern Ute Tribe, and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe); Region 6 (New Mexico), and Region 9 (Navajo Nation). EPA has activated its Emergency Operations System to ensure coordination among its regions, laboratories and national program offices in Washington, D.C. The EPA has also set up an incident command center in Durango, CO. The EPA is coordinating with officials in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Southern Ute Tribe and Navajo Nation and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe.

Response Coordination:

The EPA HQ EOC is now fully activated. Shifts will be 9:30 AM – 7 PM, Seven days a week. David Goldbloom-Helzner will staff the desk August 20, and Brian Pickard will staff the desk August 18, 19 and 21.

On August 14, 2015, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) lifted the ban on the use of private domestic water wells. NMED also issued advisories to flush irrigation ditches as a safety precaution prior to resuming irrigation for agriculture and livestock.

On August 15, 2015, New Mexico lifted the ban on using the Animas and San Juan Rivers to supply the San Juan County's drinking water systems. Until the New Mexico Game and Fish can determine the level of contamination in fish, it strongly recommends that anglers do not eat the fish they catch.

In an August 14, 2015 press release from the City of Durango, Colorado, the City resumed pumping raw water for drinking water treatment and distribution after independent sampling results supported such a decision. The City has also lifted the outdoor irrigation restrictions.

EPA Activities:

Region 8:

The CDPHE, and public water systems regulated by CDPHE in the impacted area, are taking raw and finished water samples to monitor water quality. City of Durango in coordination with CDPHE resumed pumping water from the Animas River for their water treatment plant on 8/15/2015.

CDPHE has staff in area and continued collecting the Animas River surface water and sediment sampling. Also continued outreach to public water supply system operators.

CDPHE has 7 staff in area and continued collecting the Animas River surface water and sediment sampling. Also continued outreach to public water supply system operators. Public system operators are continuing normal testing of their systems.

In response to requests from nine residents, one the EPA sampling teams will be working with the Southern Ute trip sampling private drinking water wells. Durango area operations are conducting more ditch survey work. Irrigation ditches in the southern area of the Animas in Colorado that had minimal staining will be flushing and potentially opening today.

Non-Potable water distribution as of 8/16/2015:

Total deliveries: 46 (repeat deliveries); approx. 141,480 Gallons

This was the last day for delivery of non-potable water as there is no longer a need for non-potable water delivery.

Potable water deliveries continue to be made to three locations.

Utah has requested historical water quality data from Navajo Nation in the San Juan River.

Region 6:

NMED informed EPA that the Town of Morningstar's reserve had dropped drastically and the Town only had an estimated 48 hours of available supply, as of August 14, 2015. EPA acted quickly to mobilize a temporary pump to facilitate an emergency connection between Farmington and Morningstar.

Morningstar and Farmington tested the connection. The pump works but the pipe separated in one section. System operators are working to repair the leak and will hopefully get the system back online later today.

On August 15, 2015, EPA began transporting and offloading raw water into Morningstar's pretreatment settling ponds. Seven trucks were dedicated to delivering raw water to Morningstar. It is not expected to significantly reduce the need for additional water supply. Morningstar was very appreciative of EPA's quick response and assistance.

The HQ Environmental Unit (EU) continues to assist with data validation. Daily residential sampling continues. Animas River sediment samples were posted to the incident website on 8/14. No results exceeded recreational screening levels. On August 15, 2015, EPA released additional water quality data from Aug. 7 to Aug. 11, 2015, on the San Juan River between Farmington and Shiprock, New Mexico.

At this time the private drinking water well sampling effort is completed.

Region 9:

- R9 is conducting surface water sampling and sediment sampling along the San Juan River in the Navajo Nation at 11 monitoring sites
- Surface water and sediment sampling was conducted at Lake Powell on August 15, 2015.
- The Navajo Tribal Utility Authority has initiated sampling of the three wells at Montezuma Creek and at the intake of the Mexican Hat surface water plant.
- EPA (R9) is paying for water hauling services to deliver water to areas served by wells on the NTUA – Montezuma Creek public water system which was shut down as a precaution

- EPA (R9) continues to provide over 50,000 gallons of water per day to designated distribution areas identified by NTUA.
- Water trucks to address Navajo agricultural and livestock needs have been secured and will be continuing to deliver water to designated locations.
- On 8/14 the State of Utah lifted their advisories for Utah Crop Irrigation and Livestock Watering
- Several agriculture locations rescinded their requests for water after New Mexico lifted the advisory restricting the use of private water wells. It is also anticipated that as the irrigation ditch water levels stabilize, water hauling deliveries will decrease.
- At the request of the City of Page, Arizona, EPA and START contractors sampled the drinking water intake in Lake Powell on August 17.

Infrastructure Impacts:

Region 6:

Based on conversation with the State of New Mexico and drinking water systems on August 12, 2015, the following is the list of affected water systems:

System Name	Population
Aztec Domestic Water System	6800
Farmington Water System	47000
Lower Valley WUA	8428
Morningstar Water Supply System	6423
Northstar WDWCA	4123
Southside Mutual Domestic	1593
Upper La Plata WUA	2265
Flora Vista	4300
Total Population	80,392

Sampling Results: The August 6 and 12, 2015, surface water sampling data from public water supply intakes is now available on the Gold King Mine website: <http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine/gold-king-mine-data-august-17-2015>

Typhoon Soudelor/Goni

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